

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE **2-A**WASHINGTON TIMES  
21 August 1985

# U.S. skeptical of Soviets' reports on SS-25 missiles

By Bill Gertz  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Soviet Union has informed the United States that new mobile SS-25 intercontinental ballistic missiles have been deployed, but U.S. intelligence analysts refuse to believe the missiles are operational, according to congressional and administration sources.

"They have acknowledged that it is deployed," a senior administration arms expert said of the Soviets. "But, curiously, our own intelligence people have not agreed with it at this point," the official said.

The official, speaking on background, said he did not know why the United States refused to accept the Soviet declaration on SS-25 deployment announced during a Geneva meeting of the Standing Consultative Commission two months ago.

But the official speculated that it was the result of over caution on the part of the U.S. intelligence community to confirm the deployment.

"I don't think it's tied to political considerations as much as it's simply symptomatic of the usual amount of caution the intelligence community exercises," he said.

Richard V. Allen, a former Reagan administration national security adviser, said the U.S. reticence toward Soviet arms violations stems from political weakness.

The administration does not want to draw attention to Soviet arms violations since it would adversely affect U.S.-Soviet relations prior to a scheduled November summit meeting, he said in an interview.

Mr. Allen called administration claims that publicly exposing suspected Soviet arms violations would jeopardize intelligence sources and methods "b.s. — bolshevik storytelling" — and said the administration lacks the "political courage" needed to confront the Soviets.

"There will be every compulsion now not to call the Soviets on violations of agreements, whether signed and ratified or unrati ed . . . so as not to screw up the summit," Mr. Allen said.

The administration official said the SS-25 poses a "significant threat" to the United States because it augments Soviet strategic forces with a "secure reserve" missile force.

"I think it's worrisome because it could give them greater confidence that they could use

other systems for first strike and have . . . the SS-25 held in security reserve," the official said.

Matthew Murphy, an Arms Control and Disarmament Agency spokesman, refused to comment on the SS-25 deployment, citing dangers in revealing "intelligence sources and method" as well as the potential for violating diplomatic protocol on keeping exchanges confidential.

The Standing Consultative Commission, the bilateral arms control session which meets regularly in Geneva held its most recent session April 10 through June 14, he said.

A Central Intelligence Agency spokesman referred a reporter's questions to the Defense Department and ACDA.

The Pentagon would not comment on Soviet claims the SS-25 has been deployed.

Maj. Larry Icenogle said the Defense Intelligence Agency "cannot confirm" that the SS-25 has been deployed. The Defense Intelligence Agency has detected the shifting of some intermediate-range SS-20 missiles in preparation for what analysts believe will be the deployment in the near future of the SS-25, he said.

A congressional defense expert said U.S. intelligence has detected what appear to be 18 operational systems for the SS-25 under heavy camouflage and concealment at two bases in the central Soviet Union.

The congressional expert, who requested anonymity, said U.S. reluctance to accept Soviet SS-25 deployment stems from the fact that the mobile ICBM violates the SALT II arms treaty prohibition against deploying a second new type of ICBM.

The Reagan administration last February charged the Soviets with violating the SALT II arms treaty which prohibits each side from building a second "new type" ICBM. The Soviets declared in 1982 that the multiple-warhead SS-24 ICBM was the one new missile permitted under SALT II.

The SALT II treaty was signed but never ratified by the Senate. President Reagan announced in June that the United States would continue to observe the treaty's provisions until the Pentagon can draft a report on U.S. countermeasures to perceived Soviet noncompliance.

The Pentagon report is due Nov. 15.